

## Minister lauds five-year program in Northern Tanzania for which IITA provided technical support

The Tanzania Minister of Agriculture, Hon Prof Adolph Mkenda, has praised the efforts and impacts of a five-year program in Northern Tanzania to develop the agriculture sector.



Africa RISING Chief Scientist, Prof. Mateete Bekunda visiting the exhibition booth at the event. Photo credit: E. Massam/IITA

The program, funded by the Belgian Development Cooperation, brought together four partners—TRIAS, Iles de Paix (IDP), BOS+, and Rikolto. IITA, through the [Africa RISING](#) program, provided technical backstopping through one of the partners.

The Hon Minister was speaking at an event organized to mark the program's official ending and to celebrate its successes, where he was the chief guest. He complimented all the partners and actors in the program for supporting the government in addressing challenges in the agriculture sector.

The Hon Minister said the agriculture sector was still facing many challenges, hence the need for support from many partners. "We need to identify the best way to work together and achieve long-lasting positive impact in the sector," the Hon Minister said.

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## SEFAN/SWEAN project stakeholders hold roundtable in Abuja

A two-day round table of stakeholders in Agriculture Technical Vocational Education and Training (ATVET) within the framework of the activities of the project "Support to Women Entrepreneurship in the Agrofood Sector in Nigeria" (SWEAN) was held from 29 to 30 November at the Embassy of France in Abuja, Nigeria. The project, funded by the French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs (Embassy of France in Nigeria), has [IITA](#) as the lead implementing partner.



SWEAN Project Coordinator Sougrynoma Zainatou Soré

The main objective of the SWEAN project is to expand the skills development of women entrepreneurs in the agri-food sector (agripreneurs) in Nigeria, aiming at greater empowerment and their dynamic inclusion in the market networks at local and international levels. The project also promotes the integration of an innovative and gender-responsive agribusiness curriculum into the technical and vocational education system in Nigeria in collaboration with French experts in the field.

The French Regional Agriculture Counselor, Dr Sonia Darracq, welcomed all participants and highlighted the expectations of the stakeholders' roundtable.

The highlights of the two-day event included the formal unveiling of the cooperation between Nigerian and French experts through discussions, experience sharing, paper presentations, and reflections on the framework of cooperation between France and Nigeria for the improvement of ATVET curricula in the target states of Oyo and Kaduna

In her presentation, SWEAN Project Coordinator and Head of IITA Capacity Development Office, [Sougrynoma Zainatou Soré](#), gave an overview of the project, the achievements recorded so far, which include training about 300 women in Kaduna and Oyo states relating to agri-food processing in Nigeria, based on the crops and commodities that they produce.

Addressing the media, Soré said, "We want to work with women in particular who have less access to the market so that we can strengthen what they know and how they should process their foods. We see them dry their garri on the floor, which is not proper, so we will teach them how to do that hygienically. These are the kinds of practical knowledge that we want them to know." Soré also noted the project's engagement with NAFDAC and SON to educate the women in coming up with products that can compete favorably both at the local and international markets.

In another presentation, the Director-General Oyo State Agribusiness Development Agency (OYSADA) and agribusiness advisor to Oyo State Governor, [Adebowale Akande](#), highlighted the project's benefits to women in Oyo State and beyond. He also stressed the need for things to be done differently to develop new knowledge for a new generation.

Other presenters included BASICS II Project Manager Prof. Lateef Sanni of IITA; French experts, Florent Dionizy and Yann Jagoury, from French Technical colleges in Agriculture; Director, Ebolowa Regional College of Agriculture Cameroon, Antoine Mdiba; Executive Secyary, Kaduna State Scholarship and Loans Board, Hassan Rilwan; Bilkis S. Ahmad and Samaila Tanko of The National Board for Technical Education (NBTE); and representatives from The Agence Française de Développement (AFD), The National Agricultural Extension and Research Liaison Services (NAERLS), and The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).

The brainstorming event outlined the next steps as collaborating with the French network of Technical Education in Agriculture to modernize the curricula of the agricultural technical institutions in Oyo and Kaduna and spreading the modules to other states and at the country level by promoting their integration into the Agriculture Technical Vocational Education and Training (ATVET) schools and centers.



*Top: SWEAN Project round table participants. Bottom: French Regional Agriculture Counselor, Dr Sonia Darracq (right) with some Project beneficiaries.*

## Got a story to share?

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Speaking at the event, the IDP Manager for Tanzania Ayesiga Buberwa praised IITA for bringing knowledge and technologies to support the sustainable intensification of agriculture for the rural farming communities in Northern Tanzania. She particularly singled out IITA's technical support to the program on postharvest management to reduce losses.

She said the program's intervention had contributed to positive progress towards achieving food security. According to her, from 2017 to 2021, food security increased from 38% to 78% in areas where IDP was working. These included diversification of household diets which rose from four to six types of meals. Moreover, the low usage of chemical pesticides for small-

scale farming increased from 11% in 2017 to 76%. The program also led to the establishment of eight community seed banks within the eight villages of IDP.

The event took place at the TGT ground, Arusha, on 29 November and included presentations on key achievements, experiences, and lessons from the program on promoting sustainable agriculture and food systems, environment conservation, and social inclusion.

The project beneficiaries exhibited agricultural products such as quality seeds of local varieties, processed vegetables/fruits, cereal products, cakes, wine, and chemical-free pesticides.

IITA-Africa RISING ESA Project Chief Scientist, Prof. Bekunda Mateete; Frank Haule, IITA Driver; and Eveline Massam, Africa RISING ESA project Communication specialist represented IITA.

IDP and IITA through Africa RISING partnered in scaling appropriate practices and technologies in the Karatu region, Northern Tanzania, to improve vegetable production and utilization under the Kilimo Endelevu program. Other partners in the project implementation were Research, Community, Organizational Development Association (RECODA), "Mtandao wa Vikundi vya Wakulima Tanzania" (MVIWATA) in, Arusha-Karatu District implement the Kilimo Endelevu Program.

## STEP Agri-Competition: IITA encourages participation of younger generation in agriculture

To attract, retain, and change the perception of young people about agriculture, the [Start Them Early Program \(STEP\)](#), under the Oyo State Government, organized the 2021 STEP Schools Agri-Competition, the first of its kind, on 29 November. The event encouraged young people to embrace agriculture and develop career paths, including agribusiness. STEP Communication Officer Temiloluwa Adedeji moderated the event.

The Agri-competition had in attendance the STEP impacted schools: Fasola Grammar School (FGS), Bishop Philip's Academy (BPA), Iresadu High School (IHS), Methodist High School (MHS), and UMCA Secondary Grammar School. Omolade Mosadoluwa, STEP Laboratory Technician, moderated the Quiz session.

IITA Director General [Nteranya Sanginga](#) explained the importance of the STEP program and commended the secondary school students on their ability to use the modern facilities. He also stated that the competition would identify the potentials in the younger generation. Furthermore, the

"food business would be the largest business in the continent, providing leadership and job opportunities for people," he added.

The Technical Advisor to the DG, Paul Woome, gave an overview of STEP and complimented the organizers and stakeholders for the program's rapid expansion. Excitingly, he stated that "this assembly is absolute proof that Nigeria has become one."

The Coordinator of [Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation \(TAAT\)](#), [Chrysantus Akem](#), said that the youth involvement is at the core



IITA Director General Nteranya Sanginga.

of activities carried out in IITA. He explained that STEP activities had encouraged the younger generation to build their career in modern agriculture, which will benefit the continent. He further explained that these activities

were done by introducing them to modern machinery, the climate-smart agricultural concept, using high-yielding seeds, and ensuring appropriate inputs.

STEP Coordinator Adedayo Adefioye stated that the agri-competition serves as a tool to build agribusiness leaders and have a sustainable livelihood. He noted that the competition cuts across six agribusiness enterprises—value addition, crop production and mechanization, poultry, information and communication technology (ICT), science, and aquaculture.

The CEO, Abisal Foods, Saidat Dauda, while sharing her agricultural experience, mentioned that the Internet, marketing, and networking are important strategies to boost the sales of the products. She further explained that partnering with other companies will increase employment and production capacities and the marketing of products. She encouraged the younger generation to utilize the agribusiness training opportunity and add value to their products.

Adedeji announced the winners across the agricultural enterprises: value addition- IHS; crop production and mechanization- MHS; poultry- IHS; ICT- UMCA; science- BPA, and

aquaculture- MHS. The awardees were rewarded 'Starter tool kits' for their home agribusiness enterprises. Moreover, the youth went on a tour of IITA facilities.



Top: Some STEP Agri-competition participants visiting the Analytical Services Laboratory. Bottom: STEP team and the Agri-competition winners.

## Take responsibility! Stop the spread of COVID-19!

Always clean your hands; practice physical and social distancing; wear face masks properly; avoid crowds and public places; keep a 2-meter distance from the next person; and practice general sanitation and hygiene.

# BASICS-II and AGRA to collaborate in scaling cassava seed systems in Nigeria

The Building an Economically Sustainable Integrated Cassava Seed System, phase 2 (BASICS-II) project and the Nigeria country office of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) have agreed to work closely to reinforce and promote sustainable cassava seed system models in Nigeria. They reached this resolution during a recent courtesy visit the BASICS-II team paid to the Nigeria country office of AGRA in Abuja.

BASICS-II and AGRA see the relationship as mutually beneficial as both parties work on a common crop—cassava.

During the visit, the two teams discussed areas of cooperation in the cassava seed sector in Nigeria. Specifically, the two teams explored how they could improve the sustainability of the cassava seed system to improve the livelihoods of cassava seed growers.

The BASICS-II Project Manager Prof. Lateef Sanni said the conversation with AGRA was fruitful, adding that the synergy with AGRA would impact the cassava seed sector in Nigeria and beyond.

Grown by 4.5 million farmers in Nigeria, the cassava seed sector has largely

remained informal—a situation that favors the spread of landraces but hinders the diffusion of improved varieties and keeps yield per hectare low. BASICS-II project is currently changing the narrative by creating a formal seed system beginning with Nigeria and Tanzania.

AGRA Country Manager Dr Kehinde Makinde commended BASICS-II, adding that the cooperation between the two teams would create a more significant impact on the cassava value chain.

He added that AGRA would support advocacy efforts to discourage the Federal Government from disrupting the cassava seed market. Furthermore, AGRA and BASICS-II will work with the National Agricultural Seed Council

(NASC) to make seed certification more accessible and affordable. This has been an activity that BASICS-II had made progress, but more local certifiers were still needed.

The Advocacy, Promotion, and Outreach Lead, [Godwin Atser](#), said the conversation also bordered on leveraging funding from the government and International Finance Institutions (IFIs) for investment in the seed sector. “Another area of possible collaboration was joint advocacy to create a robust market for cassava seed system and to end the disruption of seed systems through the distribution of stems that are often diseased.”

The Director of [IITA](#) Development and Delivery Office, [Alfred Dixon](#), noted that the visit to AGRA was timely and a step in the right direction. He stressed the importance of seed quality, accessibility of improved varieties, and capacity building for farmers in areas such as using the Six steps to Cassava Weed Management Toolkit and digital tools such as the IITA Herbicide calculator and Seed Tracker to enhance yield.

Other members of the BASICS-II team were TAAT Program Manager [Chrys Akem](#) and BASICS-II Project Administrator Ezinne Ibe.



The IITA-BASICS delegation with members of the AGRA Nigeria country office.